



## **Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force Minutes**

Date: Tuesday October 19, 2021

Time: 2:00-3:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://town-arlington-ma-us.zoom.us/j/96211802074>

Meeting ID: 962 1180 2074

Passcode: 776846

One tap mobile

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Present: Jennifer Raitt, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Ali Carter, Dept. of Planning and Community Development; Leland Stein, Regent Theater; Bob Bowes, Gibson Sotheby's International Realty; Sarah Morgan-Wu, The Object of Stories; Alyssa Clossey, Support Arlington Center; Rachel Zsembery, Arlington Redevelopment Board; Beth Locke, Arlington Chamber of Commerce; Steve Poltorzycki, Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture; Tom Formicola, Arlington Center for the Arts; Erik Kondo, One Broadway; Tim Haley, Ellenhorn; Michelle Casey, Marchelle Salone; Heather Leavell, Cyrus Dallin Museum; Bootsie Mullan, Town Tavern; Richard Fraiman, Capitol Theater.

Guest: Len Diggins, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel.

1. Approval of minutes for 9/21/21 meeting
  - a. Motion by Beth Locke, seconded by Steve Poltorzycki. Tom Formicola and Heather Leavell abstain. All other members in attendance approve minutes.
2. Recommendations to Select Board: Ali presented a draft memo to the Select Board with recommendations to improve the economic climate in town.
  - a. Edits to Alcohol Rules and Orders: Ali presented suggested edits to the Alcohol Rules and Orders for restaurants. Bootsie expressed that he is fine with current regulations. Rachel, Beth, and Alyssa all stated support of the changes to make it easier to open and operate different types of food and drink establishments in town. Regarding food service with alcohol, Beth

Locke expressed that loosening the requirements for china and silverware with the third served drink will inhibit the ability to attract fine dining establishments to town and that we may be overrun by casual restaurants and breweries. Sarah asked for an explanation of the reasoning behind the current silverware rule, and no one could provide a specific reason. Bob Bowes and Steve Poltorzycki expressed their support of less restrictions on restaurants. Bootsy asked for clarification that food service with the third drink would still be required, and Ali explained that it would, but the materials on which that food was served would be less restrictive. Tim Haley expressed concerns about how the suggested changes could lead to the creation of more waste. Ali described that a more diverse range of reusable materials would be allowed, and that any disposable materials would need to be recyclable or compostable per the suggested changes.

- b. Outdoor Restaurant and Retail Permit (ORRP) program: Ali provided an overview of a proposed ORRP program that would combine elements of the existing Sidewalk Café Permit program and the pandemic-responsive Temporary Outdoor Dining License (TODL) program created by the Select Board at the recommendation of the Task Force. Essentially, the proposed ORRP process would require administrative review only for sidewalk and private parking lot outdoor seating and retail operations. Only those proposals with public parking impacts, such as parklets, would need to go to the Select Board for review. This would create a single, streamlined process for all businesses in town to follow but would still monitor parking impacts carefully. Sarah questioned whether the need for “clearly defined perimeter” treatments outlined in the program document were necessary in every case, particularly for sidewalk retail applicants. Richard Fraiman said stanchions can impede people from getting in seats and create a sidewalk impediment. Erik Kondo suggested not mandating elements, such as stanchions and other perimeter treatments, that might inadvertently create a hazard.
- c. Economic Development Committee recommendation: Ali outlined a proposal to fuse representatives from various Town committees, nonprofits, and other economic development and tourism-related groups into a single committee under the auspices of the existing Arlington Tourism and Economic Development (ATED) committee. Stephanie asked how the ATED committee would function, and Ali described that it wouldn’t fundamentally change anything about the committee other than include broader representation from various other groups in town that have overlapping efforts. Bob Bowes likes the proposal as an ATED committee member. Beth Locke is very much in favor of the proposal.

Ali thanked everyone for their contributions and said she would incorporate feedback into a revised draft that she would bring to the Select Board and ATED. Michelle Casey made a motion to endorse these proposals. The motion was seconded by Sarah Morgan-Wu. The motion was unanimously approved.

- 3. American Rescue Plan Act allocations for economic development

Ali provided an overview of the proposal that the Town Manager has presented to the Select Board for their consideration and opened the conversation to questions and comments. Beth Locke asked if the funds could be used to support larger-scale projects. Jenny explained that the proposal outlined by the Town Manager is based on current ARPA guidance provided by the federal government, which could change, but for now the recommendations align with what the program says ARPA funds are allowed to support. Erik Kondo asked how many businesses the funding would be able to support, and Ali said it could range from the 585 businesses with commercial addresses in town to more than 1,200 if we include nonprofits, home-based businesses, and artists as outlined in the proposal. Leland Stein asked if recent CDBG grantees would be ineligible, and Ali replied in the negative. He next asked if there was a cap on sustaining proposal expenses (i.e., request that do not fund rent, utilities, and payroll). Ali replied that there was no cap per business for sustaining expenses except for home-based businesses. She also clarified that Airbnb hosts would not be eligible to apply. Emily Shea asked if the Town could use these funds to support more outdoor business infrastructure town wide. Jenny replied that such expenses could be eligible and joint applications are welcome, but that it is ultimately based on the recommendations of the Select Board. Emily clarified that she was referring to that funding coming from the entire \$35 million dollar pool of ARPA funds the Town received and not just for individual applications from businesses. Len stated that he liked Emily's idea. ARPA could fund improvements to open spaces to provide more equity, more opportunities to improve the mental health of residents, school children, and others. He also commented that the Board is interested in hearing the final determination of how the state will expend their ARPA funds so that local allocations are not redundant. Leland Stein commented via chat that businesses could use help in managing proof of vaccination for customers as well as expenses for businesses that cannot operate outdoors.

4. Task Force recommendations to Select Board.

Ali described that she will be making a presentation to the Select Board on Monday October 25<sup>th</sup> to make recommendations on behalf of the Task Force on the following issues that have been discussed in past meetings.

- a. New economic development committee structure.
- b. Outdoor Restaurant and Retail Permit application.
- c. Proposed revisions to alcohol rules for restaurants.

Regarding streamlining outdoor dining and retail license processes, Len suggested minimizing the number of trips that businesses must take to the Select Board. He also added that forms should be online. Ali explained that at the next meeting she will present to the Task Force a draft of her memo to the Select Board for their review and to vote upon.